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THEMBA KHOZA | Let's protect our water sources in memory of Madiba

Nelson M

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To honour the memory of SA's first democratic president Nelson Mandela in his birth month, the department of water and sanitation has come up with the "Clear Rivers Campaign" throughout the month of July to conscientise communities about the value of clean water in natural sources such as rivers, lakes and other watercourses around them.

The campaign's theme this year is "South Africa is a water scarce country, clean up and protect water sources". It promotes volunteerism to clean and protect watercourses in celebration of Mandela Month, whose own theme of volunteerism is highlighted by the 67 Minutes of Activism on his July 18 birthday. The encouraged spirit of volunteerism is in response to Mandela's call to do good for the less privileged and the environment,

The need for water security – particularly in the face of global climate change and a multitude of anthropogenic impacts affecting our rivers – calls for a unified national approach to protect our rivers, wetlands and broader catchments. Active and responsible citizenry is more than necessary to promote healthy rivers as the relationship between communities and healthy rivers can never be overstated as it is community members who must take care and ensure our rivers are not polluted and filtered with litter.

Our water resources, especially our rivers and streams, are an important part of our lives. They provide us with water, the source of life and enabler of socio-economic development. Rivers are the lifeblood of the nation. They give life and provide a multitude of benefit to them.



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Our rivers and streams not only provide us with water but also food and places for recreational, cultural and religious activities. This simply shows the close relationship between our watercourses and the communities around them, making the need for clean and healthy rivers and streams more critical.

This then calls for all of us to always respect and protect our water resources and keep them clean, healthy and free-flowing. Let us also remember that SA is a dry and water-scarce country where every drop counts as water has no substitute. It is, therefore, critical we take care of our environment and water resources to ensure the availability of quality, clean and healthy water during this dry winter season in most parts of the country.

Pollution, a man-made problem, poses a serious threat to water security as it negatively affects the quality of water leading to less water fit for use. The pollution of water sources means losing precious water, which a country like SA cannot afford. This calls for everyone to play a role in preventing the pollution of our water resources and contribute towards water security for the current and future generations.

Pollution of natural water bodies also negatively affects the health and socio-economic development of communities, and leads to water challenges such as waterborne diseases, poor quality or the loss of crops, livestock and aquatic species and the degradation of the environment in general.

Through the Clear Rivers Campaign, the department of water and sanitation urges the citizens to honour Mandela by adopting rivers and streams running through our communities. Let us protect and help keep our

watercourses clean, safe, healthy and free-flowing, and thereby also contributing towards water security for the current and future generations in our water-scarce country.

Khoza is a communications official in the department of water and sanitation.



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